(b) whether there has also been a proposal to evolve a scheme for providing working capital and other credit facilities to small domestic and rural industrial units ; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE): (a) to (c) The Government is considering a scheme for debt relief upto Rs. 10,000 to certain categories of borrowers in rural areas only. The modalities for implementing the scheme are being worked out.

The banks provide credit on liberal terms to priority sector, of which small scale industries form a part and includes domestic and rural industrial units. Bank loans upto Rs. 25,000 are available to artisans, village and cottage industries under the composite loan scheme at the concessional rate of interest of 10% per annum in backward areas and 12% per annum in other areas. No collateral security/ third party guarantee and margin are required on such loans upto Rs. 25,000/-.

Removal of two Election Commissioners

*51. SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL :
SHRI P.N. SUKUL:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) what were the reasons for removing two Election Commissioners recently;

(b) whether the decision was based on the recommendation of the Chief Election Commissioner; and

(c) whether Government have decided to keep the Election Commission as a single member body

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI) : (a) In October 1989, in view of the anticipated substantial increase in the volume of work consequent upon the expected passage of the Constitution (Sixty-fourth Amendment) Bill, 1989 and the Constitution (Sixty-fifth Amendment) Bill 1989, relating to Panchayats and Nagarpalikas and also owing to the revision of electoral rolls on account of the lowering of the voting age from 21 to 18, the Government decided to add two more Election Commissioners. Since the Bills lapsed in the Rajya Sabha and after the general elections the volume of work decreased, Government decided to abolish the two newly created posts of "other Election Commissioners", vide notification dated 1-1-1990.

(b) The Chief Election Commissioner was consulted before the said notification was issued and he opined that the volume of work did not justify a multi member Commission.

(c) The question whether the Election Commission should be a single member body or a multi-member body is presently being deliberated upon by the Committee on Electoral Reforms. After obtaining the report of the Committee, Government will take a decision in the matter.

Decline in profits of Public Sector Banks

*52. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA :
SHRI KAMAL MORARKA :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether profits of the public sector banks in the country are anticipated to show considerable de-

cline at the end of the financial year 1989-90 and that some of the banks are going into red;

(b) if so, by what percentage, profits of the public sector banks are likely to decline as against the projections, if any ;

(c) what is comparative decline in the profits during the financial years 1987-88 and 1988-89 ;

(d) what are the main reasons for decline in profits ; and

(e) what measures are being contemplated by Government in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE): (a) to (c) Since the public sector banks are required to prepare their final accounts for the year 1989-90, at the end of 31st March, 1990, the profitability position for this year will be available some time after the end of the year.

The public sector banks have been earning profits for the last several years. Their published profits which stood at Rs. 192.23 crores in 1986 have progressively increased to Rs. 261.80 crores in 1987 and to Rs. 364.90 crores in 1988-89(at the end of the March, 1989).

Export of Chromite Ore

*53. SHRI BISHAMBHAR NATH PANDE : Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that large quantities of valuable chromite ore, which is used in the manufacture of off-shore oil rigs and Inter-Continental a Ballistic Missiles, is being exported to Japan and other foreign countries by Tata Iron and Steel Company Ltd.;

(b) whether it is also a fact that besides South Africa, Zimbabwe and USSR, Orissa is the only State in India where chromite deposits are found;

(c) if so, how many indigenous factories are processing chromite ore into charge ferrochrome;

(d) whether it is also a fact that production of charge chrome is meant for hundred percent exports;

(e) if so, how much foreign exchange has been earned by exporting charge chrome during the last three years, year-wise and factory-wise ?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI) : (a) TISCO does not directly export chromite ore. Export of chromite ore is canalised through the Minerals & Metals Trade Corporation of India Ltd. TISCO is one of the suppliers of MMTC.

(b) No, Sir. Chromite deposits are also located in other countries, Moreover, though Orissa is the principal depository of chromite reserves in the country, it is also available in other States like Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh etc.

(c) Presently there are seven licensed units processing chromite ore into charge chrome/ferro chrome in the country.

(d) At present all charge chrome units licensed are 100% EOUS. Entrepreneurs are eligible to seek licence for production for domestic consumption also.

(e) As per information available, during the last three years the export earnings on charge chrome were of the following order :